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The Vineland pioneers

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BY
FRANK D. ANDREWS

Privately Printed
VINELAND NEW JERSEY
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PREFACE.

The early settlement of any town, village or city is not without interest to those persons who care for the past. If the place is that of their birth, or one familiar through a long residence, it holds a still deeper interest in the regard of all who love home and country.

The early settlement of Vineland was in a manner unusual. In 1861, a large tract of land containing thousands of acres, was acquired by one man who desired to carry out certain ideals he had long cherished—founding a model town, made attractive and beautiful, with good roads, shaded walks, and well kept and productive farms, with fruit, vines and flowers; a place where the esthetic principle would appeal to resident and stranger alike, whose social advantages would attract and hold young and old, where the united labors of the people would benefit the whole community.

To this land, a wilderness in fact, easily accessible from the large eastern cities, came settlers, drawn thither by the advantages of climate, soil, water and good markets. Settlers came from the bleak New England hills, the Middle states, the broad western prairies and from the crowded cities. Among them were men of superior education, men of ability, experience and enterprise; women of intellect, culture and refinement—a goodly class of settlers, alert to the possibilities of the hour.

Through their energy, perseverance, and high moral character, they made Vineland a desirable place to reside

With the thought that sometime in the future there will be among the people then living in this place, some inquiry regarding the early settlement, some interest taken in the early settlers, this brief account of the Pioneers and list of settlers of 1862, has been prepared.

FRANK D. ANDREWS.

VINELAND, N. J. FEBRUARY 25, 1913.

THE VINELAND PIONEERS.

Although the settlement of what is now Cumberland County soon followed the establishment of Fenwick and his Colony at Salem in 1675, settlers coming in from East Jersey, Connecticut and Long Island, building towns and villages, that portion of the county covered by Vineland remained a wilderness.

The opening of the Millville and Glassboro Railroad made this tract available for settlement. 16,000 acres owned by Richard D. Wood of Philadelphia, were secured by Charles K. Landis of the same city, who proposed to found a model town, laying it out into small farms to be sold to actual settlers only.

The first clearing was made August 8, 1861, roads were laid out and work commenced.

The first purchaser was an Englishman, J. G. Colson, who bought ten acres October 24. The second sale was to Captain George L. Post of Connecticut who began the erection of a house, the first on the Vineland tract.

With the opening of 1862, the new settlement having been advertised in the New York and Boston newspapers, visitors came and a number of sales of farms and village lots made. Among those who came this year was Capt. Samuel F. Holbrook, who at first was anything but pleased with the appearance of the place, then a dense wilderness. As he stepped from the cars to the ground, there was no depot, no building in sight, he saw a young man standing by a wagon, and asked for Mr. Landis. "I am Mr. Landis," replied the young man

Captain Holbrook was sure it was no place for him, but got into the wagon and was driven through the impenetrable forest until they reached Main Road. He asked Mr. Landis, who was then about twenty-six years old, if he thought he should live long enough to see the place settled. "Yes sir," he replied, "in less than five years there will be 1500 inhabitants here and more than 300 houses," "Well, sir," the Captain said, "You must have great faith in your enterprise."

After spending a few days at the Sharp farm, where Mr. Landis had his headquarters, talking with Captain Post, who was building opposite, and others, Captain Holbrook purchased twenty acres on the south side of Landis Avenue. The building first erected was burned, but the house that succeeded it still stands on the slight elevation east of the residence of D. Harry Chandler.

Although Captain Holbrook continued in the service of his country during the Civil War, he afterwards returned to his farm and became one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Vineland.

John L. Gerow purchased 40 acres on Landis Avenue west of Malaga Road, early in 1862. At that time he was cashier in the office of the New York Tribune.

Upon severing his connection with that paper, he made this place his home. His son Daniel C. Gerow, conducted the farm for many years and is still a resident of Vineland.

The double row of sugar maples along the Landis Avenue front of the Gerow farm. are, when touched with the changing tints of autumn, a beautiful sight and a reminder of his energy and enterprise

The experience of Oliver D. Graves of Norwich, Conn. shows how slight an incident may decide ones course in life. Through the change in administration, Mr. Graves, who was mail agent on the Norwich and Worcester Rail-

road, lost his position. He contemplated visiting California with the view of settling, when the recently published "Vineland Rural," attracted his attention and led to his visiting Vineland. He arrived on the 17th of April, the next day he rode and walked about part of the time with Mr. Landis, He visited Hammonton, but decided in favor of Vineland as a place of residence.

Returning with his wife they were obliged to go to Millville to secure accommodations for the night. He selected two and a half acres on Landis Avenue west of the Railroad for which he paid one half down, $37.50.

On having it surveyed it was found to be within the town plot instead of beyond West Avenue as Mr. Landis supposed, however, he gave him a deed as agreed upon and Mr. Graves set about building a house, the third in the square mile reserved for the village. The house is still standing, though greatly changed in appearance, on the south-west corner of Landis Avenue and Third street.

During the spring and summer a hotel was erected on the corner of Landis Avenue and East Boulevard by C. P Davis, a native of Vermont. On its completion Mr, Landis moved his office from Main Road to the front room on the second floor of the new hotel.

The new buildings, opening of roads and general improvements gave promise of permanency to the settlement which had its influence upon visitors, resulting often in a sale of town lots or farm land. Of those who came to see one hundred and thirty decided to make an investment.

At the close of the year 1862 Mr. Landis held his first annual reception at the hotel which was attended by some eighty persons, nearly the entire population at that time, many of the recent purchasers not having settled.

The year 1863 brought large additions to the flourishing settlement; the Founders annual reception was held

at the recently erected hotel, the Magnolia House, the population had so increased that one thousand or more were present, about six hundred of whom partook of supper.

In 1864 the influx of settlers exceeded any previous year and more than five hundred houses were erected.

Mr. Landis held his reception at the Magnolia House again, two thousand persons were in attendance, about one half taking supper.

During 1865 progress continued at a somewhat modified rate, two hundred buildings were added to the town among them a factory built of stone for Mr. Landis, in this building on South Sixth Street the annual reception took place, two band furnished music and refreshments were served to the three thousand persons who came in response to the general invitation.

The year 1866 opened with an estimated population of 5,500, and Vineland from a wilderness of five years before had become an important place and widely known.

In December 1866, the settlers of 1862, having for several years joined with the later arrivals in the annual receptions, formed an association of their own, it was called "The Vineland Pioneer Association." The object of the association was to celebrate the anniversary of the close of the first year of Vineland. The committee to arrange for the first annual festival were: J.C. Parsons, O. D. Graves, H. Z. Ellis, L. Demmon and S. F. Holbrook.

The festival was held on Monday evening, December, 31, at Union Hall. The "Pioneers," included all person settling in Vineland previous to January 1st. 1863, and a general invitation had been given to them.

The report says there were about sixty persons present, old and young. "After a short time spent in social intercourse, the company sat down to an excellent supper prepared by Mr. Webb of the Magnolia House. After the repast had been sufficiently discussed, the chairman

of the evening called upon C. K. Landis Esq., to address the company, which he did in an entertaining manner. He gave many interesting and laughable reminiscences connected with the early settlement of Vineland, and great as its past success had been, he predicted greater prosperity in the future."

At the conclusion of Mr. Landis' remarks, the company all joined in singing an original song prepared for the occasion by Mrs. Edgett. After the song, the Chairman called upon Capt. S. F. Holbrook, who entertained the company agreeably for a short time. Remarks were also made by Capt. A. S. Hall, Mr. Wallace Holbrook and Mr. C, B. Campbell. The tables were then cleared and the company joined in the "Merry Dance." It was in the "small hours" of the morning when the company parted. We trust they will continue their gatherings from year to year, and thus preserve the social feeling that bound them together in the early days of the settlement."

An original poem by Mrs. Edgett contained these lines:

"Through hardships, weariness, and tears,
We wrought the task of Pioneers!
In 'sixty-two, some seventy-five
Would represent our little hive,
Now, thousands throng on every hand,
And yet there's room, and work, and land.

* * * *

Yet still we'll keep this festal even,
And meet again in sixty-seven,
To mingle greetings, songs, and cheers,
With the gallant Vineland Pioneers!"

The second annual festival of the Vineland Pioneers was held in Reed's Hall, on Tuesday evening, December 31, 1867. Although a severe storm prevailed, about 100 persons were present and enjoyed the bountiful collation provided by the ladies, through a committee consisting

of Mrs. Swain, Mrs. H. Z. Ellis, Mrs. J. C. Parson Mrs C. C. Gifford, Mrs. Gwynneth, and Mrs. Thayer.

After supper, came music and speaking. Captain Holbrook said he was proud to be called a Vinelander. The grand secret of Vineland's success was found when Mr. Landis put his foot down firmly against grog shops, he could not speak too highly of Vineland

Mr. Landis spoke briefly of the material prosperity of the place, and complimented the ladies on their generous entertainment and interest in the success of Vineland.

The "Song of the Little Pioneers," written by Mrs. Edgett, was sung by Romie Ellis and Eva Boynton, two little Misses of twelve years.

C. B. Campbell said he was a "pioneer" by marriage only, his wife locating in 1862, he in 1863. He spoke of the superiority of the settlers over Western towns in wealth, intelligence, and refinement.

"A Happy New Year," sung by little Mira Lombard, followed by a duet by Mrs. C. and Mrs. S. McMahan, concluded the evenings entertainment.

The third annual festival of the Vineland Pioneers, was held Thursday evening, December 31, 1868, in the newly erected Merchant's Hall. The opening hour was devoted to music and an interchange of greetings. Supper was served at eight o'clock, tables were set for one hundred and three. After supper, the company arose and indulged in a grand march around the spacious hall, on resuming their seats, Miss Mira Lombard, Romie Ellis and others sang the "Opening Chorus," arranged for the occasion, two verses of which are as follows:

"Old Time is ever on the wing,
And bears us on where'er he wills
With hopes and fears our hearts he fills,
He makes us sad! He makes us sing."

Another year is passed from view—
Another year is hastening on—
The olden year will soon be gone—
Ring out the old, ring in the new."

In response to a request for voluntary speeches, Master Edwin, (son of Stephen T. Ellis,) aged fourteen, spoke very acceptably of Vineland and the Pioneers, concluding as follows:

"It will be our highest pride to perpetuate the memory of the noble pioneers of Vineland—by you who have made this

'The land of fruit, the land of Spring—
Land 'neath a favored sky—
Land where the strange bird's weary wing
May fold no more to fly.
For here we prove
Brothers and sisters we become
On touching Vineland sod.
Inmates of one expansive home,
Children of one true God."*

Singing and speech making followed, and a resolution was passed before adjournment, asking for pictures of the early settlers, for the Historical Society.

At the fourth annual meeting of the Pioneer Association, Friday evening, December, 31, 1869, the settlers of 1862, met in Reed's Hall. Mr. J. C. Parsons served as Chairman.

The usual features of the festival prevailed, and after a bountiful supper the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved "That it is most fitting and expedient that these gatherings of the pioneer settlers of Vineland should be annually held as commemorative of the origin of one of the most remarkable colonies on record, and that as our members decrease with the increase of new

*Vineland's poetess—MRS. A. M. spaulding.

settlers and our years decline with the uprising of new generations, we respectfully suggest to the children who come after us to observe this annual meeting of the Pioneers of Vineland."

Eighty-five persons were in attendence, representing the families of Messrs Beach, Campbell, Chance, S. T. and H. Z. Ellis, Fish, C. C. and Pardon Gifford, Gwynneth, A. S. Hall. Haswell, Capt. Holbrook, Howland, Lombard, J. C. Parsons, Robbins, Stevens, Thayer. and Wager.

At the close of the exercises, the young people engaged in dancing, indeed, some of the older persons present also indulged, to pass the time, until the New Year was ushered in—when with congratulations and good wishes the pioneers departed for their homes.

The following year,(1870), the preliminary meeting was held at the residence of W. O, H Gwynneth, south west corner Boulevard and Chestnut Avenue, but I have been unable to find any report of the festivities at the close of the year.

The first decade brought many changes to the pioneers, some had been removed by death, while others had found homes elsewhere. So many organizations had been formed that the Pioneer Association could not or did not maintain their own against them, and, although they had informal gatherings and held occasional meetings at the homes of the members, the organization, as an organization, like so many others in the life of the town, are now but a memory of the past.

The names of purchasers of land in the town of Vineland N. J. during the year 1862; with the date of their first payment, who, with their families, if settlers of 1862, were eligible for membership in the Vineland Pioneer Association.

Names.	1862 Date.
John S. Adams	June 30
Charles H. Adamson	June 19
Amasa H. Allen	between January 10, and March 8
Franklin Allen	August 14
John C. Ashley	August 6
Albert A Atwater	October 22
Douglas W. Barker	October 13
Ridgway Barnes	June 30
N. or W. F Bassett	July 7
Alexander Batcheller	May 12
Kezia Batcheller	May 12
Myron Beach	December 12
James Beacham	April 16
Levi A. Beardsley	September 24
J. D. Berry	March 26
Charles Bickerton	May 12
Henry Bishop	December 18
Charles A. Boynton	November 11
Charles Brett	May 13
C. A. Buskirk	May 24
— Calkins	October 15
Phoebe T. W. Campbell	December 24
Isaac Carlton	October 17
Mary Cavanaugh	October 15
Charles H. Clark	July 29
George C. Clay	May 9
Elizabeth J. Cleaveson	May 20
William W. Cone	August 8
George D. Corlis	September 27

David Cunningham	October 22
Frederick K. Dame	March 8
Louis Darcy	December 12
Hezekiah Davis	March 22
J. R. Dearing	September 19
Lucius Demmon	between January 10 and March 8
Edward Dennery	March 19
John Dennery	March 8
Ezra Dibble	October 30
Hazen Z. Ellis	July 10
Stephen T. Ellis	June 10
Francis N. Evans	May 20
Rev. Emerson Brown	April 3
J. V. Faunce	April 21
James J. Fearow	July 18
James Finch	July 19
Winslow L. Fish	May 15
Eben M. Fletcher	between January 10 and March 8
James C. Forbes	August 1
Freeman Rowland	May 15
J. C. Fuller	September 15
Samuel Geddes	June 2
John L. Gerow	April 3
John Gibson	August 19
Chester Gifford	December 17
Pardon Gifford	November 1
William W. Gifford	December 17
Oliver D. Graves	May 1
Louisa S. Gwynneth	March 26
John J. Haley	January 10
Albert S. Hall	December 1
Benjamin Rush Harper	December 18
John H. Haswell	December 15
J. B. Hawkins	May 9
— Hilton	—— —
Charles L. Holbrook	between April 3 and 14

F. M. Holbrook	July 22
Samuel F. Holbrook	between February 10 & March 8
W. W. H. M. Holbrook	July 22
Joseph E. James	March 26
John R. Johnson	November 22
John Kaufruan	between January 10, and March 8
C. B. King	April 19
John Kingsland	June 27
Luther H. Kinne	July 29
John Knight	December 29
J. S. Kuhns	November 19
V. R. Lane	December 24
Raphael Lang	December 24
E. Leffingwell	September 8
B. F. Lincoln	June 17
John Lombard	June 19
Ann Ludham	September 20
Elizer D Marvin	November 22
C. Mather	December 26
Maria P. Mathews	between January 10, and March 8
C. Mood	January 9
George Mood	March 28
Edgar Morehouse	October 20
William A. Morgan	September 3
Haskell B. Morrill	March 20
O. Packard	August 7
James C. Parsons	June 19
D. H. Perry	May 19
Mary Ann Powers	between January 10, and March 8
Thomas J. Quigley	between January 10, and March 8
George W. Reifenberg	December 19
Christian Rein	November 1
J. Rice	April 14
Lester Richardson	between January 10, and March 8
John Rist	June 4
Cynthia S. Robbins	August 13

Joseph Rollins	June 7
Loven Russ	April 2
George T. Russell	October 28
Calvin N. Sage	May 28
William H. Shultz	April 19
Jethro Soule	December 17
W. J. Spencer	September 11
John H. Stratton	March 31
Stephen Nelson	December 29
Benjamin Swain Jr	October 22
Landon Taylor	September 20
Samuel Tregale	November 5
John C. Ulrich	December 4
J. D. Van Pelt	July 11
Jacob Vanzvater	June 19
Alonzo Wager	December 23
Christian Wenz	September 18
William A. White	November 1
Thomas Wilkes	March 22
Thomas Wilkinson	March 22
James Williams	October 15
Joel H. Willis	between January 10, and March 8
Stephen S. Wistart	November 10
Nathan Wiswell	November 10

The names of purchasers given above were originally copied from Mr. Charles K. Landis' list of sales of land during the year 1862.

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